

## Message Text

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41

ACTION AID-31

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 OES-06 PA-01 /056 W

----- 002414

R 150937Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4792

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: --

SUBJECT: AIDSAT DEMO: UAE WRAP-UP

AIDAC

SANA FOR AL NAGY

AMMAN FOR WHILHELM

REF: ABU DHABI 1433

1. AS WE SAID TWO AND HALF MONTHS AGO (REFTEL) AUGUST IS NOT OPTIMUM TIME TO DO THINGS IN ABU DHABI. UNFORTUNATELY THAT PROVED TO BE EVEN MORE OF AN UNDERSTATEMENT THAT WE HAD ANTICIPATED. IN SHORT, DESPITE OUTSTANDING EFFORTS OF AIDSAT DEMO TEAM WHICH RESULTED IN PROGRAM OF HIGH TECHNICAL QUALITY, LOCAL AUDIENCE AND IMPACT, AT LEAST IN IMMEDIATE SENCE, WERE LIMITED.

2. EVENTS LEADING UP TO AND EVEN INCLUDING ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM ITSELF WERE INMANY RESPECTS COMEDY OF ERROR AND CONFUSION. KEY OFFICIALS IN PRESIDENTIAL PALACE WHO HAD EXPRESSED HIGH AND, WE BELIEVE,GENUINE INTEREST IN PROGRAM AS RECENTLY AS LATE JULY, DEPARTED COUNTRY WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT WITHOUT NOTICE. UNDER SECRETARY MININFORMATION WHO HAD OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY

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FOR UAE SIDE OF AFFAIR, DROPPED BALL FOR FEW KEY DAYS

WHEN HE THOUGHT HE TOO WOULD BE LEAVING COUNTRY AND WOULD NOT BE HERE FOR THE PROGRAM. COMBINATION OF THOSE TWO MISADVENTURES RESULTED IN THE FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT EVER TO IDENTIFY WHERE IN PALACE THEY WISHED RECEIVER TO BE PLACED--AND RESULT THIS WAS NEVER DONE. (SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SHAIKH ZAYED'S DEPARTURE TO MOGADISCIO FOUR DAYS BEFORE THE DEMONSTRATION VIRTUALLY EMPTIED PALACE OF ALL OFFICIALS IN ANY CASE.) DESPITE EXCELLENT LINEUP OF PANELISTS AS ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED (ABU DHABI 2047) THINGS DID NOT QUITE WORK OUT. ONE PANELIST WENT TO LONDON AND FAILED TO KEEP PROMISE TO RETURN; ONE GOT HUNG UP BY PLANE TROUBLE IN BAHRAIN; ONE PROMISED THE DAY BEFORE THE PROGRAM THAT HE WOULD BE PRESENT AND SIMPLY WENT TO DUBAI INSTEAD WITHOUT EXPLANATION; AND ONE SIMPLY DISAPPEARED--EVEN HIS WIFE HADN'T SEEM HIM FOR THREE DAYS. SO WE WERE LEFT WITH TWO OF THE ORIGINAL SIX AND THOSE DRUMMED UP TO FILL IN WERE LACKING. AND SO IT WENT. IT WAS NOT THEREFORE TERRIBLY SUPRISING THAT ALMOST NO ONE SHOWED UP TO WATCH IN ABU DHABI (EVEN THOSE THE EMBASSY INVITED FAILED TO COME--LIKE EVERYONE ELSE THEY WERE PROBABLY OUT OF TOWN).

3. ALL OF WHICH IS NOT TO SAY THERE WERE NO PLUSES. TECHNICALLY THE SHOW WAS EXCELLENT (WE HAD NONE OF THE PROBLEMS FACED IN BANGLADESH--DACCA 4008). LOCAL TELEVISION PEOPLE WORKED WELL WITH AIDSAT TEAMS, AND THEY BOTH LEARNED FROM AND WERE IMPRESSED BY DEMONSTRATION. IN DUBAI, WHERE RULER SHAIKH RASHID BECAME PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN PROGRAM (THOUGH HE TOO LEFT THE COUNTRY BEFORE THE DAY OF DEMONSTRATION DESPITE SAYING HE WOULD BE PRESENT), AUDIENCE WAS MUCH BETTER WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE LEADING GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICIALS AND LOCAL BUSINESSMEN AT RULER'S PALACE AND OTHERS GATHERED AT TV STATION. LOCAL OFFICIALS REMAIN VERY INTERESTED IN POSSIBILITY OF RESHOWING PROGRAM ON LOCAL TV (THEY FILMED ENTIRE SHOW AND RESULT WAS NOT BAD). IF THEY CARRY THROUGH WITH THIS AFTER THE RAMADAN HOLIDAYS WHEN EVERYONE HAS RETURNED FROM ABROAD THERE WILL CLEARLY BE POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER IMPACT. FINALLY THERE WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEFINITE IF SOMEWHAT INTANGIBLE BENEFIT FROM USG OFFERING TO PUT ON DEMONSTRATION OF THIS TYPE IN UAE SIMPLY AS EXAMPLE OF OUR INTEREST IN THIS COUNTRY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. EVEN IF NOTHING FURTHER RESULTS FROM THIS PARTICULAR PROJECT, SUCH EFFORTS ADD UP AND CONTRIBUTE TO FRABRIC OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH UAE.

4. COMMENTS ON PROGRAM CONTENT: WE HAVE DISCUSSED OUR VIEWS OF PROGRAM WITH NAGY AND WILHELM AND WE KNOW FROM THESE DISCUSSIONS THAT OUR THOUGHTS ARE NOT PARTICULARLY NEW. NEVERTHELESS WE OFFER THEM FOR RECORD. AS INDICATED ABOVE, TECHNICALLY PROGRAM WAS EXCELLENT. DESPITE PRIOR CAUTIONS THAT WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT PICTURE QUALITY AT LEVEL WITH COMMERCIAL PROGRAMMING, ALL HERE WERE VERY IMPRESSED. FACT THAT FILMS HAD ARABIC SOUND TRACK WAS DEFINITE PLUS. BUT EVEN THIS DID NOT MAKE UP FOR WHAT FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE WAS OVERLY LONG PROGRAM. IN DUBAI WHERE WE HAD OUR BEST AUDIENCE, MANY, INCLUDING RULER'S SON, WALKED OUT. IF WE HAD JUST HAD PRESIDENT'S GREETING AND LANDSAT FILM AND THEN LIVE PORTION, WE WOULD HAVE RETAINED FAR GREATER INTEREST. AS FINAL NOTE, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF SOMEONE COULD PREP US PARTICIPANTS ON PROPER PRONUNCIATION OF ARABIC NAMES. POST SHOULD HAVE SUPPLIED PHONETIC SPELLING (THOUGH WITH LAST MINUTE CHANGES THIS WOULD NOT HAVE SOLVED PROBLEM HERE) BUT INPUT FROM WASHINGTON-BASED ARABIC SPEAKER WOULD ALSO HELP. STERNER

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